



Getting Back Together Homecoming and Reunion Tips

Adaptation by CH (MAJ) Vermont, 902d Group
Chaplain

Originally Presented by Chaplain (CPT) Shawn E.
McCammon



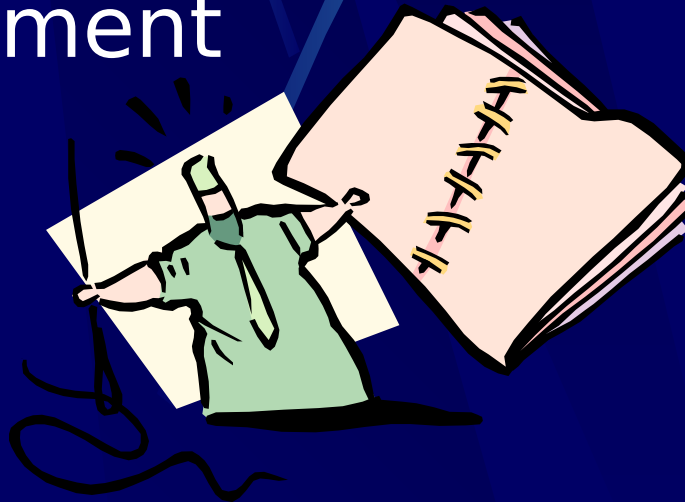
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Objectives

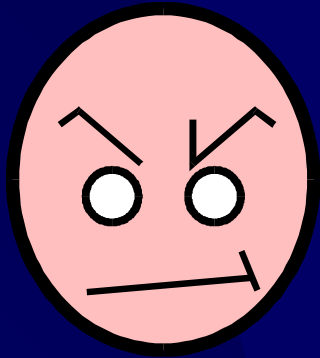
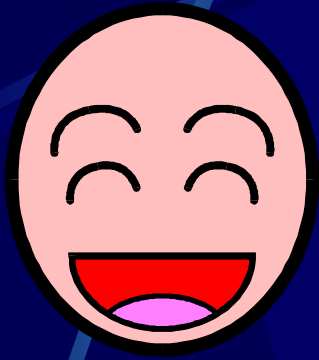
- Establish realistic expectations about reunion
- Understand the 4 areas of readjustment



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Reunion Joys and Concerns



- What does reunion mean to you?
- Reunion is the reuniting of people after a period of separation
- What are some joys you expect?
- What are some concerns you expect?

Getting Back Together

- Expectations and fantasies are an important part of our lives. It does not matter if expectations are joys or concerns about homecoming and reunion.
- No matter what you daydream about, you may not be physically or mentally able to carry out some of your expectations and fantasies.
- There is no way to predict what homecoming and reunion will really be like.

Getting Back Together

- One thing to remember is that not only have you changed, but so have the people you are returning to.
- All the problems you left behind have not magically disappeared.
- All the expectations you have about your reunion may not happen.
- It is important to understand and accept that things back home will probably be different from what you expect.

Getting Back Together

- Accepting change is a major factor in reestablishing yourself when you return from training.
- Keeping this change factor in mind, if I had asked the people you are returning to the same question about their joys and concerns, do you think your list would match with theirs?
- Many of their expectations may be the same, but some may be very different.

Ways to Communicate

- A key to understanding different expectations is how well we have communicated during the separation and how well we will communicate when the deployment has ended.
- Now that you are going home what can you say besides reporting the weather conditions or discussing how tired you are of the food?
- Tell them your expectations (joys and concerns) and encourage them to do the same (it's not too late).

Intimate Relationships



- Among the major adjustments you face when you return are your intimate and sexual relationships.
- The best thing you can do is to go slowly. Don't anticipate "normal" sexual relations for a few days.
- You and your spouse are likely to feel like strangers with each other, and strangers do not have good sexual relations.
- A few ideas that may be helpful during this period of adjustment are:
 - Try not to rush
 - Talk a lot about how you feel, and . . .
 - Ask how your partner feels regarding intimacy and sexual matters

Expectations of Change

- You can view change in two different ways. One way to view change is as a crisis or threat. The other way is to view change as either a hidden opportunity or as a slight disruption in the way things used to be.
- If change is viewed as a crisis or threat, people try to pretend the change did not happen. They may avoid or deny the change. They may spend time wishing things were the way they used to be.

Expectations of Change

- If change is viewed as a hidden opportunity or merely as a slight disruption in the way things used to be, then it usually is more readily accepted.
- People who view change in this positive way acknowledge that change has occurred, and that it can become an accepted part of life.
- Often, this view of change mobilizes people into new ways of thinking, which leads to a fresh beginning.

Areas of Readjustment

- Family
- Social
- Environment
- Military and Civilian Employment
- Ways of Coping with Stress

Family Readjustment

- The WHOLE family dynamic has had to change
- Each member of the family will undergo their own readjustment in a way & pace unique to them



Stress with Children

- Children had to cope with stress and uncertainty in their lives due to the separation. A returning soldier must understand that change is often frightening for a child.
- Depending upon the duration of the separation, a parent(s) may seem like a stranger, especially to younger children.
- Soldiers with children may have to restart their relationship with their children.
- Remember that both you and your children have experienced changes. Work slowly and lovingly to reestablish your bond.

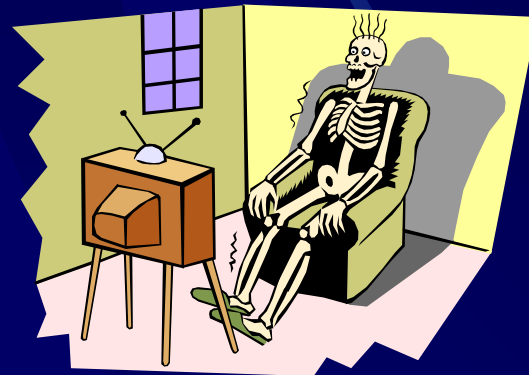
Social Readjustment



- **Soldiers/civilians you met during the deployment will be returning home. Others will be transferred. The camaraderie you have experienced may no longer be there.**
- **You may feel like your alone because friends have chosen other interests.**

Environmental Readjustment

- The third area of readjustment is environment. Environment can be everything from getting behind the wheel of your car, to the weather, to what is the latest in music, clothing, or TV shows.
- Some of these changes may surprise or unnerve you.



Occupational Readjustment



- Have people been transferred? Is your old job available, or has someone else taken it over? Are there new people in the organization?
- What is your view of how you will be received by your non deployed colleagues?

Stress

- A point to remember is that people back home experienced different types of stress than you did. You had the opportunity to focus almost exclusively on your job while you were away.
- Your loved ones, on the other hand, not only maintained the day-to-day tasks that already existed, but they may also have had to take on many of your day-to-day tasks.
- If you sense you're on overload, be conscious of "self-medicating" behaviors. (Alcohol, over the counter drugs, and other means of handling stress)

When to Seek Professional Help

- Depression lasting for 7-10 days or more
- Changes in Sleep Habits
- Changes in Appetite
- Angry Outbursts
- Feeling Overwhelmed
- Juggling how many balls?
- Feelings that even God has abandoned you



Conclusion

- Reunion may be a challenge. If you begin right now to communicate your expectations and encourage those back home to do the same, the transition will be easier.
- Keep in mind that there will be stress due to the changes that have occurred. Remember to look at change as a hidden opportunity or a slight disruption, and not as a crisis or dead end. A positive outlook will make for a smoother adjustment.

Questions?

